

Finding Aid of 33MSS-114: R. Stanley Wahab and Family Papers, 1931–2005

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[Outer Banks History Center](#)



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Descriptive Summary

Repository:	Outer Banks History Center
Creator:	Jean Carr
Title:	33MSS-114, R. Stanley Wahab and Family Papers, 1931 – 2005
Language of the Materials:	Materials in English
Location:	For current information on the location of these materials, please consult the Outer Banks History Center
Abstract:	<p>Robert Stanley Wahab, Sr. (1888 – 1967) was born on Ocracoke Island, February 3, 1888 to Hatton and Martha Howard Wahab, and was descended from two of the island's early families. He spent his youth on Ocracoke Island where his textbooks came from shipwrecks and his father served in the U.S. Lifesaving Service at the Cedar Hammocks station. After tours at sea, business college, and positions in retail businesses, education and accounting, Wahab and an associate formed the company Retail Store Services in 1927, a furniture buying cooperative for high-end furniture stores that had limited buying power alone. While running that business until 1947, he built the Wahab Village Hotel in 1936, Ocracoke's first modern hostelry. The Wahab Village expanded to become a resort including a campground, hunting and fishing club, rental cottages, and a dinner and dancing club, the "Spanish Casino." Wahab also helped bring electrical and ice plants, telephone service and improvements to roads and the ferry service to Ocracoke. He was married three times and had three children.</p> <p>This collection consists of family history files and photographs; a large general ledger of R. Stanley Wahab's business and personal affairs over a period of six decades, 1931—1994; and, an oversized item—a brochure from the Wahab Village (circa 1950s), resort promoting cottages, a campground, a hunting and fishing club, and boating with 22 photographs (some partial) and a map of Ocracoke Island, circa mid-1930s. Photographs primarily depict Ocracoke Island including many during and shortly after World War II. There is one heretofore unknown image of the Diamond Shoals Lightship.</p>
Extent:	.3 cu.ft.

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Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

These materials are available to researchers with the condition that any published work that may result from such research will give appropriate credit to the Outer Banks History Center.

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Preferred Citation

[Identification of item] 33MSS-114, R. Stanley Wahab and Family Papers, 1931 – 2005, Outer Banks History Center, Manteo, N.C., USA.

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Acquisitions Information

Donated by Jean Carr, Chapel Hill, N.C.

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Processing Information

Processed by K. Lisbeth “KaeLi” Schurr

Finding aid by K. Lisbeth “KaeLi” Schurr

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Historical Note

Robert Stanley Wahab, Sr. (1888 – 1967) was born on Ocracoke Island, February 3, 1888 to Hatton and Martha Howard Wahab, and was descended from two of the island’s early

families. He spent his youth on Ocracoke Island where his textbooks came from shipwrecks and his father served in the U.S. Lifesaving Service at the Cedar Hammocks station.

In 1904, he went to sea on the menhaden schooner “Fanny Sprague” followed by a tour as a seaman on Dredge Number Three of the Norfolk Dredging Co. in 1905. A return to Ocracoke in 1906 led to a golden opportunity to join the crew of a luxury yacht Tech” owned by industrialist T. Coleman du Pont when the vessel was in need of a crew while enroute from Florida to Delaware.

At duPont’s urging, Wahab attended the Goldey Business College in Wilmington, Delaware. This training opened the door for a succession of jobs in businesses specializing in provisions. In 1910, he returned to Ocracoke and in 1911, married his high school sweetheart, Fanny McWilliams. Sadly, she died one year later. In this period, he ventured into the education profession, teaching mathematics at Norfolk’s Maury High School and serving as principal of the public school in Ocracoke and at the lake Landing School in Hyde County.

After an unsuccessful bid for public office, Wahab ventured beyond the shores of Ocracoke once again, making a living in education and as an accountant, and completed more college coursework in accounting and law. He also met and married Lucille Grandy of Norfolk, Va. Together, they had three children: two sons, Robert S. and Wilson H., both of whom later became attorneys, and a daughter, Lillian E. who would later become a school teacher.

From 1920-24, Wahab served as comptroller for a retail chain based in Baltimore, Md. then in 1927, he and an associate formed the company Retail Store Services, a furniture buying cooperative for high-end furniture stores that have limited buying power alone. In 1947, due partly to declining eyesight, Wahab sold his interest in the company he founded, and returned to Ocracoke.

Through the years, Wahab had continued to keep ties to his home and engaged in a number of businesses. In 1936 he built the Wahab Village Hotel, the island’s first modern hostelry. The Wahab Village expanded to become a resort including a campground, hunting and fishing club, rental cottages, and a dinner and dancing club, the “Spanish Casino.” Wahab continued to add real estate acquisitions to his holdings, ranging up and down the North Carolina coast. Once he purchased 1,000 acres then donated it to the U.S. government for the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Wahab was also responsible for bringing modern amenities to Ocracoke. He was instrumental in the building of the first electrical and ice plants, helped to finance telephone service, and saw to the improvement of roads and the ferry service.

Having lost his second wife in 1924, Wahab married Myra Edwards of Belhaven and they lived out their lives in the old Wahab family home.

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Collection Overview

This collection consists of family history files and photographs; a large general ledger of R. Stanley Wahab's business and personal affairs over a period of six decades, 1931—1994; and, an oversized item—a brochure from the Wahab Village (circa 1950s), resort promoting cottages, a campground, a hunting and fishing club, and boating with 22 photographs (some partial) and a map of Ocracoke Island, circa mid-1930s. Photographs primarily depict Ocracoke Island including many during and shortly after World War II. There is one heretofore unknown image of the Diamond Shoals Lightship.

Collection Arrangement

This collection is arranged into 4 series by record group which are housed within 2 boxes and an isolated oversized item. Series 1 holds a small assortment of family history documents. Series 2 includes the photographs. Series 3 consists exclusively of the general ledger and Series 4 is the oversized promotional brochure.

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Online Catalog Headings

These and related materials may be found under the following headings in online catalogs.

Subject Terms

Businessmen--North Carolina--Ocracoke
Diamond Shoals Lightship
Howard family
Tourism
Wahab family
Wahab, Robert Stanley, 1888 – 1967

Geographic Locations

Ocracoke (N.C.)
Ocracoke Island (N.C.)

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Related Collections

Additional information on topics found in this collection may be found in the Manuscript and Archives Reference System (MARS): <http://mars.archives.ncdcr.gov/BasicSearch.aspx>.

Container List

33MSS-114, R. Stanley Wahab and Family Papers, 1931 - 2005 (2 boxes and 1 separated oversized item, 13 folders inclusive)

- | | |
|---------------------|--|
| Folder 1:1.1 | Finding Aid |
| | Family History Documents |
| Folder 1:2.1 | “The Howard Family of Ocracoke, N.C.” unpublished manuscript by Dora A. Padgett (Washington D.C.), 41 pg. |
| Folder 1:2.2 | Genealogical chart and family history notes |
| Folder 1:2.3 | Letter, dated June 23, 1936 to R. Stanley Wahab from his son, R.S. Wahab, Jr. from Paris describing his travels while serving as midshipman (vessel unknown) and plans for deployments of the accompanying vessels, the USS Oklahoma, USS Wyoming, and the USS Arkansas. |
| Folder 1:2.4 | Marriage announcement, Hedy Marie Wahab (neice to R. Stanley Wahab) to Richard William Walsh, June 26, 1943, Norfolk, Va. |
| Folder 1:2.5 | Letter, dated April 18, 1956 to Myra E. Wahab, secy. from Mrs. David Batterson, Altadena, Calif., former caretaker of Mrs. Wahab and resident of Ocracoke Island during and shortly after World War II, sharing memories and seeking up-to-date information about the island. |
| | Photographs |
| Folder 1:3.1 | R. Stanley Wahab |
| Folder 1:3.2 | Diamond Shoals Lightship and other vessels |
| Folder 1:3.3 | Village scenes, aerials, and landscapes |
| Folder 1:3.4 | Buildings, interiors and exteriors |
| Folder 1:3.5 | People (mostly unidentified; 2 possibly of the couple referenced in folder 1:2.4) |
| Folder 2:4.1 | General Ledger from various businesses and personal affairs of R Stanley Wahab: Journal, 1950-1990; Assets, 1950-1994; Notes Received, 1959-1994; Stocks, 1943-1987; Real Estate, 1949-1975 (Cottages and Hotels); Furniture and Fixtures, 1931-1980; Liabilities, 1949-1993; Profit and Loss, 1955-1988, 1990-1992; R.S. Wahab Capital Account, 1951-1993; Income, 1952-1994 (Sale of Lots: Wahab Village, Parker’s Hills, Beachside, Silver Lake, Beachland, Portsmouth, Frisco/Pamlico Sound Shore, Kennekeet(sic)/Roanoke Island); Expenses, 1948-1994). |
| Folder 3:5.1 | Oversized advertising brochure from the Wahab Village resort promoting cottages, a campground, a hunting and fishing club, and boating, with 22 photographs (some partial) and a map of Ocracoke Island, circa mid-1930s; Separated and located in GRF Drawer 16. |